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MRLs for Pesticides and Chemicals in Agricultural Crops

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Report Highlights:

In Russia, Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides and agrochemicals in agricultural crops are developed by the Federal Service for the Protection of Consumer Rights and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor) of the Ministry of Health and Social Development. The translation of Russian tables with MRLs in objects of environment, including in agricultural crops, can be found on the web-site: www.mrldatabase.com.

Executive Summary: In Russia, Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides and agrochemicals in agricultural crops are developed and established by two different independent agencies. The Federal Service for the Protection of Consumer Rights and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor) of the Ministry of Health and Social Development develops the MRLs for pesticides and agrochemicals. The Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (VPSS) of the Ministry of Agriculture examines, approves and registers pesticides and agrochemicals, which can be used in Russia, and controls MRLs of pesticides and agrochemicals in agricultural crops grown and imported into Russia. The basis for this control is developed by Rospotrebnadzor. These MRLs are structured in the tables by names of active substances. The translation of Russian tables with MRLs in objects of environment, including in agricultural crops, can be found on the web-site: www.mrldatabase.com

General Information:

Development and Adoption of MRLs for Agrochemicals in Agricultural Crops

The MRLs of agrochemicals and pesticides in agricultural crops are developed by several research institutes within the Ministry of Health, the core Institute being the Institute of Erisman (web-site is: www.fferisman.ru) at the Federal Service for the Protection of Consumer Rights and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor). The norms are developed for pesticides and agrochemicals which are registered in Russia. The norms shall be approved by the special Rospotrebnadzor's Commission and then put into force by a resolution of the Chief Sanitary Physician of the Russian Federation, the Head of Rospotrebnadzor. MRLs for pesticides in agricultural or food products are grouped by active chemical substances, not by product. Usually the additions and amendments are made after a certain new chemical/pesticide is tested in Rospotrebnadzor and proved safe, or the former chemical/pesticide is proved safe for a broader range of external entities, including crops. Usually Rospotrebnadzor examines new chemical on the request of a chemical company, which is interested in inclusion of its chemical or new ingredient in the list of approved chemicals in Russia. The chemical is examined, and Rospotrebnadzor's institutes develop norms of its MRL in a human body, in soil, in water, in air, and in products (crops). MRLs in products are usually developed for groups of traditional Russian products. Thus, non-traditional crops may not be mentioned among products, for which MRL is determined.

Approval of Agrochemicals and Control of MRLs in Agricultural Crops

Another Russian agency, the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (VPSS) at the Ministry of Agriculture approves and registers pesticides and agrochemicals for use in the Russian Federation, develops norms of application of agrochemicals, and controls MRLs of agrochemicals, including pesticides, in agricultural crops, both produced and imported into Russia. The Ministry of Agriculture also annually publishes standards in the State Catalogue of Pesticides and Agricultural Chemical Substances Allowed for Use in the Russian Federation, available in Russian on the Ministry of Agriculture website at http://www.mcx.ru/index.html?he_id=961&doc_id=7610. The catalogue contains chemical groupings, usage requirements, application timeframes, and a list of chemical agents to be used for each pest or weed. Chemical agents not listed in this catalogue are banned from use and their residue is not allowed in or on foodstuffs.

VPSS's control over presence of chemicals in agricultural crops is based on the MRLs approved by Rospotrebnadzor (HN 1.2.1323-03 and amendments to this Hygienic Norm). Unfortunately, after the Russia's administration reform 2003, coordination of activities on issues of MRLs for agricultural crops between VPSS and Rospotrebnadzor has weakened.

Bilateral Memorandums on MRLs

In 2008 VPSS signed separate memorandums with EU and Chile on the safety of plant products for human consumption exported from these countries to the Russian Federation concerning pesticide residues, nitrates and nitrites. In both memorandums paragraphs on MRLs stipulate that "the Russian side confirms that if there is no Maximum Residue Level (MRL) for pesticide residues,

nitrites specified for a certain type of product in the Russian legislation, the MRL for the most similar product included in the same commodity group (as defined in the Codex Alimentarius) applies, and that if there is no MRL for the commodity group, the MRL of the Codex Alimentarius applies. If there is no MRL of the Codex Alimentarius, the MRL of the country of origin applies”.

VPSS has also signed memorandums with several countries on exports to the Russian Federation of specific commodity groups (i.e. rice, soybeans, soybean meal). Among other requirements, the exporting country shall undertake measures that the exporter is aware of Russia’s MRL requirements, and that the exporter shall provide information to VPSS on the pesticides used at growing and storing of the plant product, on the date of the last treatment, and on MRLs of pesticides in these products.

MRLs in Food Products

Rospotrebnadzor develops MRLs of chemicals and pesticides in certain food products and controls these norms in food products. These norms are not as detailed as the framework MRLs for External Entities, and define permissible content by food product groups. The MRLs of chemicals and pesticides in food products are stipulated in the SanPin 2.3.2.1078-01 (Hygienic Requirements to Safety and Nutritional Value of Food Products) and in the amendments to this SanPin. SanPin 2.3.2.1078-01 and amendments to this SanPin are approved and put into force by resolutions of the Chief Sanitary Physician of the Russian Federation, the Head of Rospotrebnadzor. Information on the SanPin 2.3.2.1078-01 and amendments to this SanPin (in Russian) can be found on the Rospotrebnadzor’s web-site: <http://www.rospotrebnadzor.ru/documents/>

The unofficial translation of the Hygienic Norms for Pesticide Residues in the External Entities (HN 1.2.1323-03), MRLs table and later amendments to these Norms can be found on the www.mrldatabase.com